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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000378

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/10/2020  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: POLITICAL MANEUVERING AND IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

REF: A. BAGHDAD 373  
[B](#). BAGHDAD 320  
[C](#). BAGHDAD 294

Classified By: Pol-Mil M/C Cameron P. Munter for reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (S/NF) SUMMARY. The Iraqi Army (IA) continued to complicate the political situation in Salah Ad-Din (SAD) by forming a cordon around the SAD Provincial Council building, with orders from the Prime Minister to prevent access by the Provincial Council Chairman. Additionally, the PM attempted to replace the heads of both arms of intelligence at the Ministry of Defense (MOD). Due to direct involvement by USF-I Commanding General Odierno and fears of disruption to the agencies involved during a critical election security time-frame, the orders to replace the two intelligence heads were withdrawn. As campaign season officially kicks off February 12, Post expects to see more maneuvering by the PM and opposition parties within the security and intelligence ministries. End Summary

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IA Involvement in Salah Ad-Din Disputes  
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[1](#)2. (C) On February 9, the Iraqi Army formed a cordon around the Salah Ad-Din (SAD) Provincial Council (PC) building, with orders from the Prime Minister to prevent access by the PC Chairman Ahmed Abdullah Abid Khalaf (Abu Mazin). The IA Commander in SAD initially resisted the order, noting that the Police were responsible for this type of security action, but complied after the PM reiterated the command that the IA establish the cordon (ref A). The Iraqi Police maintain security of and control over the building; all other PC members and visitors are allowed access through the IA cordon. (NOTE: The PM's order is the latest act in the three-month standoff (refs A and B) over the seating of the governor-elect. End note.) The DCM and POL M/C each urged senior advisors to the PM to remove the IA from the SAD PC building (ref A).

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Press Highlights IA Campaigning Examples  
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[1](#)3. (C) In the lead up to the national elections, both local press and foreign press focus on pushes from official organs of the state to promote individual candidates. A recent NPR story highlighted Sunni concerns over a free and fair election, and followed-up a report on the Independent High Electoral Commission's (IHEC) promises to Anbari Sheiks with a tale of Iraqi Army units nearby handing out calendars emblazoned with photos of PM Maliki on them. One soldier told the reporter he had been ordered to hand out the calendars, while another soldier openly campaigned for Maliki as the cars stopped at the checkpoint. Post will continue to track these stories.

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¶4. (S/NF) MG Hazim Bakhit Taiah Al-Ja'afari, Director General of the MOD Directorate General for Intelligence and Security (DGIS) notified USF-I on February 5 that he had been told that he was being replaced as the Director General of DGIS. He said that SMG Ala'a Jassim Al-Amiri, the Joint Headquarters (JHQ) Military Intelligence Chief (M2) had also met with the MinDef and was told that he was being replaced. After discussions with MOD, and direct involvement in correspondence from USF-I Commanding General Odierno to MinDef, neither change occurred due to the potential organizational disruption they would have caused in the lead up to the elections. According to MG Hazim, he was to be Qup to the elections. According to MG Hazim, he was to be replaced by a Kurd named Shargl, who is reportedly a former Minister of Peshmerga. Shargl had met with the Minister of Defense at the request of President Jalal Talabani. MG Hazim was to continue to work with Shargl for an unspecified period of time.

¶5. (S/NF) MG Hazim reported the Prime Minister issued an order three days prior that replaced the JHQ M2, SMG Ala'a Jassim Salman Al-Amiri, with Hatim Jabar Al-Maksusi. Hatim works with Abu Ali Al-Basri and the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) which report directly to the PM and does not participate in some inter-intelligence cells, such as the National Intelligence Cell (NIC). SMG Ala'a was to remain with the M2 through the elections working with Hatim.

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Comment

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¶6. (C) As the election campaign season officially kicks off February 12, Post expects to see more maneuvering by the PM and opposition parties within the security and intelligence ministries. Whether through the promise of patronage, or trying to hedge post-election fall-out by seeding security forces and intelligence services with allies (ref C), both Maliki and his opponents may take further advantage of friendly or divided units to score political points. Others may follow suit, whether through pressure within the Ministry of Interior to support MinInt Bolani's candidacy and party or maneuvering by Peshmerga units in the disputed areas to influence voters to back the two larger Kurdish parties and candidates. End Comment.  
HILL